



Protection of Civilians amid Terrorism Prevention

Transcript Webinar

In cooperation with

SINOPRESS



Speakers

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member of the Vienna State Parliament and
City Council

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nese Business Association

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Political scientist and an expert for the Euro-
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Transcript

Bernhard Müller: Good morning, distinguished panelists and guests! On behalf of URBAN FORUM, I would like to welcome you to this online Forum. My name is Bernhard Müller, my colleague Helena Chang from SINOPRESS will introduce herself in a few minutes.

After the first successful cooperation between SINOPRESS and URBAN FORUM in March on the topic of "Terror attack, Security and Human Rights", we're proud to carry out today's forum on the topic of "Protection of Civilians amid Terrorism Prevention".

The required ongoing anti-terrorist campaign worldwide is drawing more and more attention to the safety of the civilians in the conflicting countries or regions. The intricacy and delicacy amid terrorism prevention has been causing complications in protecting the rights and the safety of the innocent civilians. The COVID-19 pandemic is only adding insult to injury. What has happened and is happening to terrorism and anti-terrorism? How to optimize the protection of civilians amid terrorism prevention? What has happened and is happening to terrorism and anti-terrorism? How to optimize the protection of civilians amid terrorism prevention? Today, our panelists will share their expertise and opinions on the related issues.

I would like to briefly introduce the panelists for today's forum:

Mag. Marcus Schober, Austrian politician, director of the Vienna Education Academy, member of the Vienna State Parliament and City Council. A warm and friendly welcome, Marcus!

Marcus Schober: Good morning. Thank you for the invitation!

Bernhard Müller: It's our pleasure! Our next panelist is Professor Dr. Georg Zanger, well-known Austrian lawyer and President of the Austrian Chinese Business Association (ACBA). Good morning, Georg!

Georg Zanger: Good morning. Thank you for the invitation!

Bernhard Müller: Thank you so much, Georg! Now, Dr. Nicolas Stockhammer, security policy

analyst and counterterrorism researcher at the Institute for Legal Philosophy of Vienna University. Good morning and welcome!

Nicolas Stockhammer: Thank you, good morning!

Bernhard Müller: Thank you, Dr. Stockhammer! And last but not least, Mag. David Kainrath, a political scientist and an expert for the European affairs. Welcome!

David Kainrath: Thank you and good morning!

Bernhard Müller: I would like to give the floor now to my colleague Helena Chang for the first round of questions. Helena, the floor is yours.

Helena Chang: Thank you, Bernhard! A warm welcome from my side, too, to all our guests today, especially to our distinguished panelists! I'm Helena Chang, Editor-in-Chief of SINOPRESS. As Bernhard stated just now, the issue of civilian prevention amid the anti-terrorism campaigns is not to be ignored and is indeed being paid more and more attention to. I believe today's discussion will generate deep analysis as well as inspiring views and I'm pleased to have the honor to start the first round of questions.

Allow me to begin my question with Mr. Marcus Schober. Mr. Schober, the rights of the innocent civilians in countries and regions with terrorism are under big peril. But the anti-terrorism campaigns could also inadvertently bring danger to them, physically, economically, socially and culturally. How to avoid such scenario, in your opinion?

Marcus Schober: I think anti-terrorism campaigns that are conducted by multiple states on an international level are always high-risk carriers, as they require foreign troops to operate in a foreign country. These troops usually have the best intentions but are unfamiliar with the foreign country, unfamiliar with its social and cultural norms. Yet they have to conduct military operations in those terrains, running large-scaled operations in the elevated environment. I mean it is almost impossible (to do the job) without any physical, economic, social or cultural damages done to the civilian population. However, one mustn't forget that it's

these troops' primary target to protect the civilian population because the terrorist groups aim to harm the civilians. Therefore, one must assess whether the benefits outweigh the detriments.

Helena Chang: The benefits. Could you be a little more concrete about the benefits in this context?

Marcus Schober: I think the most important thing is peace.

Helena Chang: I think so, too. Peace should be the priority.

Marcus Schober: It should be the priority, of course, yes.

Helena Chang: Thank you very much, Mr. Schober! I agree with you totally. Now I'd like to come to Dr. Georg Zanger. Dr. Zanger, civilians in the terror regions are often squeezed by broad-framed anti-terrorism laws and measures, with little or no recourse. How to protect the innocent civilians during the anti-terrorist campaign, ensuring their human rights from the legal point of view?

Georg Zanger: Thank you for the question! In order to assess counterterrorism measures, it is first necessary to explore when and how terror arises and where it has its roots.

Currently, the terror of Islamic extremists, especially the so-called "Islamic State" IS, is in the foreground. If one goes back in history by a few centuries, one can easily find documentation for the unimaginable terror that the industrialized world exercised in the so-called "colonies". We all have our "past" and build our cultures on it. No matter if it is the Christian culture, if it is the Jewish culture or the political cohesion of results of the revolution. In reality, the fight against terror would have to start with enlightenment. The enlightenment makes us to be aware of what happened in the past and what we did to the people in their previous generation, and who have now been infiltrated by terror thoughts.

But this is precisely what is not happening. The current societies in the Western countries are also characterized by racial discrimination, persecution of minorities and political and



economic exclusion, regardless of whether they are so-called “democratic” or so-called “dictatorships”. Only when we have understood this as a basis can we approach the immediate fight. Fighting terrorism therefore essentially consists of educating people, persuading them to think differently, and educating them to coexist peacefully while at the same time proving that armed conflicts lead to further wars and terrorist attacks lead to further terror.

Helena Chang: Thank you, Dr. Zanger! You are offering us profound views into the problem. Now that you mentioned racial discrimination, I’d like to ask Dr. Nicolas Stockhammer a related question. Dr. Stockhammer, you are an expert on human rights. Concerning the scope of human rights protection, the survival right of the innocent civilians during counterterrorism should not be ignored. Yet, the civilian casualties due to anti-terrorist campaigns have occurred repeatedly. Is racial discrimination or personal contempt in the foreign military troops stationed in the relevant countries a question to be asked in this context? If so, is there a solution to it?

Nicolas Stockhammer: Okay, thank you very much for this question! It’s a question not very easy to be answered. I would like to get a starting point on the facts. If we take the case of IS, which was mentioned by Dr. Zanger just now, this terrorist organization was explicitly involving civilians, using civilians as target or protective shield. Similar cases applied to the Taliban in Afghanistan. So, we are facing now a battlefield of blurred lines, which makes things quite complicated, counterterrorism operations in particular. To avoid the complication, the US armed forces are following specific Rules of Engagement and combat directives.

Considering those blurred lines, though, it is sometimes not very easy even if there is profound intelligence to differentiate between innocent civilians and guerrilla fighters. We have observed this during the Vietnam War with the Vietcong, where terrorist organizations tried to infiltrate and bring civilians on their side. That caused a lot of difficulties.

But referring to your immediate question whether personal motives may have an im-

pact on that: Definitely this may be the case. The question of racism in armed forces, in particular, with reference to counterterrorism operations also has to be raised. According to my observations, this has played a rather minor role in the past. In the future, this may become more and more important to observe.

The question of human rights protection is crucial, but there are certain drawbacks in the vicinity. We have to take those into consideration. Counterterrorism is always dependent on intelligence, always dependent on following the rule of law for the foreign troops in another country. We have also the question of who should take care of the human rights issues, who to execute and who to be the court to judge whether human rights are violated. This whole complex sets off a new complex of further questions, in my opinion.

Helena Chang: You observed the blurred lines, Dr. Stockhammer, also the racial discrimination and its related consequences caused by the foreign military troops stationed. What do you think of the function of the UN here? Is the UN playing an effective roll here? Do you think the role of the UN should be strengthened?

Nicolas Stockhammer: I think it would be a great idea to strengthen the role of the UN. But in the past, we have seen that the major geopolitical actors have sometimes found their ways in getting around the UN decision-making. And in my experience, the UN has its value when backed by the key players. But if we take the case of the United States, for example, when we consider what had happened in Iraq in 2003 and the following years, the UN was reduced to theater players, where power politics took place. I think its function can only be maintained upon greater consent among the key players in politics and this involves the United States. It depends on the administration in charge of the United States government, now with the administration of Joe Biden’s. I think there is a certain opportunity to back up the UN, but if we consider the case of Donald Trump, there is a lot of drawbacks in that regard.

Helena Chang: Geopolitics is a keyword, I guess. We might be able to discuss a bit more about geopolitics later. Thank you very much,

Dr. Stockhammer for your analysis! Now last but not least, I’d like to raise a question to Mr. David Kainrath.

Mr. Kainrath, I heard you lived in Sweden as well as in Belarus before, where terrorism also happened. Both countries suffered from bloodshed by terrorist attacks. The 2017 terror attack with a hijacked truck in Stockholm killed five people. The 2011 Minsk Metro bombing killed 15 people and injured more than 200 others. The Stockholm perpetrator was a rejected asylum seeker who had sworn allegiance to the Islamic State in a self-recorded video the day before the attack. The Belarus one was done by two perpetrators with not even cleared-up motives. So why? Could you inspire us on this? How do you think the lives of innocent civilians can be protected with such terror attacks happening worldwide (not to mention the attack last November happened in Vienna where we live)?

David Kainrath: Thank you, Helena, for a very interesting and also very difficult question to answer. I would like to start by saying that I’m a political scientist, and I use a comparative political rather than the legal or counterterrorism expert perspective which we have in this esteemed panel already. And I also would like to add that not only did I live in Sweden for 10 years when unfortunately, in Stockholm, the terrorist attack took place. I also happened to have the privilege to live in France, where several terrorist attacks happened. I lived in Belgium for half a year where the airport was bombed. And I lived in Belarus, of course, with one terrorist attack in the history of the country, happened in 2011. I had the great pleasure and privilege to study for a month at Fudan University in Shanghai, where I felt was probably the safest of all places.

Considering your question, I would like to remark a few things. When we talk about Europe, about the terrorism as a problem in the European context, it seems natural to all the participants here that we talk about terrorism prevention as a duty of the police force. Nobody talks about the military, about soldiers on the street. Everybody thinks of terrorism prevention as a duty of the police. I believe this is the way it should be, but this should only be one side of the strategy.



Dr. Zanger already mentioned some of the contributing factors which lead to terrorism. He mentioned the racial discrimination and social injustice and I would also like to add corruption and general rule of law. These factors are probably universe, or wherever you have terrorism, you probably also have these factors which enable or facilitate terrorism. For example, when there is corruption and a lack of rule of law, it will be easier for the terrorists to procure weapons and to organize in secret, and also to recruit people for their cause.

If you have all these factors present, the rule of law is bad, corruption is there, plus racial discrimination and social injustice, there is still one element that might be the step forward with all the conditions already being there to allow terrorism actually to take place. That is "radicalization". And this is where the police work actually comes in because all the factors before are not dealt with by the police. You don't create social justice with the police. You don't fight racial discrimination primarily through the police. You don't fight corruption primarily by the police, it is to be done by the judicial authorities.

But when it comes to the police, that's when radicalization starts and when those groups actually form. They go from idea to action. Here you need a dedicated specialized police effort to fight terrorism. In this regard, I would also like to say, it's probably the most ungrateful job in the world, because when the police work is successful, we never hear about it. We only hear about it whenever it fails. I can probably not give you good examples when the police work actually succeed in preventing terrorism attacks because we very rarely hear about it.

Helena Chang: Good point! And the security forces could be also compromised. This topic is a big thing to talk more about in the future. If we have a chance, I'd love to hear more about your opinions on that. Thank you again, Mr. Kainrath, for sharing your deep view!

Now that I've completed the first round of questions, I'd like to hand the floor back to Bernhard, please.

Bernhard Müller: Thank you, Helena. It was extremely interesting to listen to the opinions of all the panelists! I will now start the next round of questions with Mr. Marcus Schober.

Dear Marcus, at present, COVID-19 is still raging on a global scale. Besides the severe social and economic damages, the pandemic seems to be posing new challenges to security in some areas, too. The increasing shortage of adjustable resources is being taken advantage of by terrorism in some regions. Meanwhile, some countries suggest that effective measures to limit the spreading of the COVID-19 virus, such as blockades, quarantines and mobility restrictions, are successful in reducing the risk of terrorist. What is happening to terrorism under the pandemic? How do you evaluate the emergency measures against COVID-19 pandemic worldwide?

Marcus Schober: Concerning COVID-19 pandemic, there seems to be a lot of extremism over the entire situation. Those developments were to be expected. Additional related measures which have been deployed in most countries to manage the pandemic are leading to an increase in anti-government sentiments. Quarantines may initially lead to reduction in terrorism, because there are less people in the street and therefore less potential targets. But in the long run, I believe isolation will make trouble. Unless something is done, it will result in more extremism, hate and terrorism.

In general, I believe most related measures are necessary, especially during the early days of the pandemic. However, we are reaching a point where measurements aren't necessary to the pandemic, but to the inability of governments to vaccinate their population efficiently. This is what we're currently witnessing in Austria and I consider this as unacceptable.

Bernhard Müller: Thank you very much for speaking out, dear Marcus! We will now continue with Dr. Georg Zanger. Georg, as was discussed in the first round, civilians in the terror regions are often squeezed by broad-framed anti-terrorism laws and measures, with little recourse. Does the right of recourse, if there is any, apply to indigenous peoples such as Native Americans and Native Australians?

Georg Zanger: The actions of the power of that time, especially the United Kingdom of England, but also France in the conquests against Indians and Indigos joins the crimes against humanity that were later the order of the day in the Middle Ages and the beginning of the industrial age. To believe that generations of human beings do not carry this subjugation and mistreatment is an illusion. Similar to the compensation of forced laborers, compensation should also be paid for the indigenous people who were persecuted through decades.

When we speak of human rights being indivisible, this undoubtedly applies to indigenous peoples and Native Americans, as well as Australian Aborigines. It also applies, of course, to autonomous regions, as in Tibet, as in Xinjiang Province, as with the many nationalities that are united in China. Unlike other states, China grants autonomy to national minorities, respecting and preserving their history and traditions.

Helena Chang: Allow me to resume the roll of moderation. Dr. Zanger, as you pointed out, history was filled with actions of power and conquests of foreign land, causing incredible trauma for indigenous peoples. Right now, human trauma is continuing in fighting against terrorism. There are numerous cases of civilian injuries or deaths in countries like Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia and other anti-terrorist battlefields. One case, for example, brought me to attention. That is what happened with the Australian troops in Afghanistan. There have been reports in the past years about some illegal deeds done by the Australian troops in Afghanistan. Last year, there was a known case, 25 members of a special unit unlawfully killed at least 39 prisoners or civilians. And the Australian Defense Forces' chief said that it is definitely "shameful balance sheet". How to interpret such military war crimes?

Georg Zanger: When historically sustainable conflicts are resolved through war, only the arms industry emerges victorious. To cover up the inhumanity of the military, state-sanctioned fake news is spread as information. This has been the case, for example, with the first Iraq war, which has gone down in history as a "war of lies." The same is true for the second Iraq war, the Afghanistan war and the still



ongoing conflict in Syria. Here, demonstrations of power are being carried out that not only cost the lives of hundreds of thousands of innocent people, but also build further barriers and are virtually a breeding ground for future terrorist attacks. Not to understand this shows the arrogant lack of understanding of our industrialized world.

Concerning the 39 prisoners or civilians killed by the Australian soldiers on 19. November 2020 during the mission in Afghanistan, it is no coincidence that many people in our country do not think on (the issue of) torture as much as waterboarding or killing of civilians. China went another way with some form of education for a certain period of time, to change the opinion of the (potentially dangerous) people. For example, China recognizes that national autonomies are of particular importance and significance. Indeed, there is no other way to understand that there are 56 autonomous regions in China, that religious freedom is not only guaranteed, but that further religious education and the practice of religious events are encouraged. In few countries in the world does the state contribute significantly to the preservation of religious sites, such as mosques and the like, and last but not least, the reconstruction of Tibet has only been possible with state funds. You see, this is another way to fight against terrorism, no bombing, no war. We have to discuss which way is better. In the end, history will show it. Thank you!

Helena Chang: Thank you so much, Dr. Zanger! Yes, the world needs more discussion about how to use alternative methods to avoid bombing and killing, to avoid injuring civilians. Civilians can hardly run away from ill-fate, either by terrorism or by anti-terrorism.

Now I like to come back to Dr. Stockhammer. Strengthening collective actions between countries and international anti-terrorism co-operations should definitely help cope with the terrorism problem. But are there faux-pas to be avoided? Where is the starting point? Which aspects should be paid more attention to reassure the safety of the innocent civilians in the affected areas, Dr. Stockhammer?

Nicolas Stockhammer: Thank you for the question. The starting point is the strengthening of collective actions. I think internatio-

nal cooperation is crucial. In particular, taking into consideration, the conflict fighting terrorism abroad will reduce the risk of terrorism in our home countries.

When it comes to the potential victims of counter-terrorist operations in the regions themselves, it is a very different and difficult question. As I mentioned at the very beginning, one proper way to reassure the safety of innocent civilians could be to isolate the enemy to identify who's on the side of the terrorist organizations. To separate potential victims of any terrorist operation by putting up a barrier line to substantially push the enemy into a certain area where it's perfectly clear who's the bad guys. When it comes to the measures of the international law and international organizations, the issue becomes even more complicated, as we've seen in the case of ISIS. International law would not attribute ISIS the role as a subject (legal status). So we actually face now and also in the past some sort of Gray War, which means the mandate of fighting these terrorists organizations is not always perfectly clear. There are sometimes different motivations to fight them. We have seen that very clearly in Syria where the alliances between different actors made up two different positions. For example, the Russians were in Syria to support Bashar al-Assad. They were not there to fight ISIS even though they did it actually, but it was rather a collateral effect. And here we have seen many casualties among civilians because of their actions. The Americans call it collateral damage, too. This is something we should put on the table of the law.

When it comes to the protection of civilians, many of those military operators have planted collateral damages. It is something to be taken into consideration. While attacking ISIS somewhere in their hideaways, if there are civilians around or not, they don't seem to care. This is the truth and we should face that. This could be a starting point to raise awareness among the public, maintained by media reporting, by initiatives of NGOs and also by what you mentioned before in the framework of the United Nations. Actually, this is a power politics problem rather than a legal problem in my opinion.

Helena Chang: Power problem and geopolitics. Allow me to add one question to you,

Mr. Stockhammer! On one hand, terrorist groups won't abide by any international laws or regulations. On the other hand, though, if the international corporations don't look into the cultural differences as well as the racial issues, they are doomed to fail, no? What do you say?

Nicolas Stockhammer: Definitely! I think any international intervention and support in those regions should broadly discuss the question you just raised. And I think it partly happens, but as I mentioned before, many of those decisions are made in the framework of the UN Security Council with the interest of the actors playing a key role. The coordinated position of the UN in such conflicts where some of the members of the Security Council are directly involved always entails difficulties. I think we should be very cautious with such analysis because the factuality sometimes tells us a different story without those realistic drawbacks. I agree with your point.

Helena Chang: Thank you very much, Mr. Stockhammer! Yes, I guess we'll all have to be realistic. Mr. Kainrath, you are a political scientist. Do you see a bright future, in general, concerning the protection of civilians in a fight against terrorism?

David Kainrath: Well, thank you for this question! I'm not that experienced to predict the future. I see some positive trends and I see some worrying trends. I will start with the worrying trends. That is that the world is becoming a more and more unstable place. We have the proliferation of local and regional conflicts around the world. And we also see the destabilization and increasing lawlessness up to the level of failed states inside several countries, let alone to mention the Middle East and North Africa region where there are several armed conflicts on the way, which also provide a safe haven and hotbed for terrorists.

I would also like to mention the east of Ukraine where there is a civil war going on. All of those conflicts, of course they spillover. As Mr. Stockhammer already correctly pointed out, they are not completely isolated from where we're living, the safer parts of the world, because there are returning fighters from those conflicts. They're also people



who leave from the safety of their relatively stable home countries to go and engage in these conflicts. This is a new challenge and will certainly not make the threat of terrorism and the fight of the civilian victims smaller, but rather bigger.

On the positive side, though, I think in the last 10-15 years, we have seen quite a few efforts to increase international cooperation to prevent and fight terrorism. In this context, there is of course dimension where they use security union strategy which points out a long list of measures about how the anti-terrorism authorities of the different countries can better cooperate. We have a very special situation in Europe with freedom of travel among all the European countries. Yet there are 27 police agencies. There are 27 digital systems and so on. Only recently have they come to the conclusion that they must cooperate much more closely in order to effectively prevent terrorism.

The same is happening on the international stage. Here I probably do not need to highlight to you, the intricacies of the Shanghai cooperation organization which also has a mandate to help its members to fight terrorism and separatism. And there is also the Collective Security Treaty Organization, which has a similar mandate for the Central Asian countries and Russia. I think if these corporations continue with development in good faith, our societies will be able to prevent more terrorist attacks.

In the end, it all goes back to the root causes of terrorism. And there, I completely agree with Dr. Zanger, adding perhaps the old slogan of the peace movement saying "There is no peace without justice".

Helena Chang: Thank you so much for your insight, Mr. Kainrath! Time flies! As this forum is approaching its end, allow me to pass the floor back to Bernhard.

Bernhard Müller: Thank you, dear Helena! On behalf of URBAN FORUM and SINOPRESS, I would like to thank you all so much for your participation and your valuable input! We sincerely hope to have another chance to meet each other again, to continue or to further our discussions! Thank you again and have a nice today!

21st April 2021



TIPP

Transcript Webinar Terror Attack, Security & Human Rights #onattack

On March 17, 2021, SINOPRESS, together with Urban Forum, carried out an online forum concentrating on the topic of "Terror Attack, Security & Human Rights". The honored panelists included Peter Florianschütz (Chairman of the Committee for European and International Affairs of the Vienna Municipal Council and State Parliament), Anat Hochberg-Marom (expert on global terrorism & radicalization, Israel), Georg Zanger (well-known lawyer in Vienna, President of AC-BA), Franz Leidenmühler (Head of the Institute for European Law at the Johannes Kepler University Linz), Michael Weilguny (IT specialist/Manager, Vienna) and Franz Piribauer (public health expert, alma mater Harvard School)

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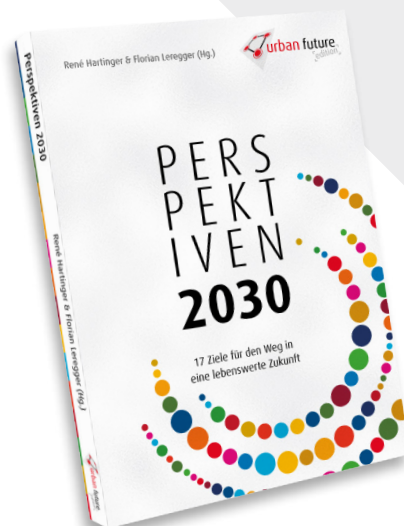
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